

Asbury Theological Seminary ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange

Syllabi

eCommons

1-1-2003

DO 690 John Wesley's Theology for Today

Kenneth J. Collins

Follow this and additional works at: <http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi>

Recommended Citation

Collins, Kenneth J., "DO 690 John Wesley's Theology for Today" (2003). *Syllabi*. Book 2247.
<http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/2247>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the eCommons at ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. For more information, please contact thad.horner@asburyseminary.edu.

John Wesley's Theology Today
DO 690
(2 hours)
Kenneth J. Collins, PhD

This syllabus may be changed from time to time for academic reasons. It is for the personal use of students enrolled in the internet course DO 690 and is not to be distributed beyond these parameters.

I. Welcome

Welcome to DO 690, John Wesley's Theology Today. The life and thought of John Wesley is fascinating, marked by highs as well as by lows. It is filled with all the drama of peoples, places and movements, large conversations as well as smaller ones. Besides being the founder of Methodism, John Wesley was the most important single figure in eighteenth-century Anglicanism. Our explorations throughout this course will indicate just why this was so.

Beyond my work in the field of Wesley studies, my theological interests include soteriology, anthropology, and Christology, to name but a few.

This is the first time that I am offering this course via ExL, and though I enjoy working with computers, I suspect that I will make more than my share of errors the first time around. Please, then, be patient with me and I will be patient with you.

We are on a journey together and I hope by means of our discoveries that we will have a greater appreciation of the life and thought of John Wesley, of his significance with respect to eighteenth-century Anglicanism and Methodism, and of his relevance for contemporary Christian practice and witness.

II. Office Hours

I will go online Monday and Friday afternoons to respond to your questions. If I make any changes in this format, I will be sure to inform you.

If you ever need to contact me, I will be available on Friday afternoons from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. in my office.

My email address is ken_collins@asburyseminary.edu

My office telephone number is 859-858-2368.

III. Support

There are some other people who can help you during this course. They are available to assist you if you have any questions:

For technical support, contact **Andy Adams**
ExL_Support@asburyseminary.edu

For information concerning this course or the ExL program, contact
ExL_Coach@asburyseminary.edu

For library assistance, contact the ExL Reference Librarian, **Hannah Kirsch**
Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu

For library assistance regarding book and article requests, contact **Dot James**
Dot_James@asburyseminary.edu

IV. Course Description:

The course will explore the theology of John Wesley in terms of his doctrine of salvation. Principal attention will be given to the following elements:

1) the nature of justification, 2) the significance of Wesley's Aldersgate experience, 3) the new birth, 4) assurance 5) the faith of a servant, and 6) Christian perfection.

In terms of methodology, the course will proceed in a Socratic and dialogical manner as it entertains an array of possible meanings of selected texts. This process, intense in many ways, should enhance the ability of students not only to understand the thought of Wesley in greater depth in its eighteenth-century context, but also to think historically and critically. Moreover, the course will be attentive to current scholarly interpretations of Wesley's soteriology and will assess such judgments in light of the primary evidence. All the tasks of the course, then, will concern exploring Wesley's practical divinity in terms of its relevance for twentieth-century theology and ministry.

V. General Goals:

Upon completion of the course successful students will be able to do all of the following:

- 1) Identify the major elements in Wesley's soteriology, especially in terms of the order evidenced in the key sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation."
- 2) Evidence an awareness of historiographical concerns in the interpretation of Wesley's soteriology, especially in terms of narrow, limited or unfair (biased) perspectives
- 3) Explore the interplay between religion and culture especially in terms of the

intellectual developments (philosophical and theological) of the eighteenth century as reflected in Wesley's writings.

4) Display an extensive knowledge of the theological distinctions and nuances employed by Wesley in crafting an articulate and well-developed theology, especially in the areas of justification, the new birth, and entire sanctification.

5) Demonstrate an understanding of the continuing significance of Wesleyan theology today especially for the broader ecumenical community.

6) Conceive one's calling as a minister of the gospel in light of the Methodist theology and practice.

7) Articulate the relevance of Wesleyan theology for effective pastoral ministry today

VI. Texts:

Required:

Burwash, Rev. N. ed., *Wesley's Fifty-Two Standard Sermons* (Salem, Ohio: Schmull Publishing Co., 1967). **All Fifty-Two Standard Sermons Must Be Read.**

Collins, Kenneth J. *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997).

Wesley, John. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990).

Collins, Kenneth J. *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999).

Collins, Kenneth J. and Tyson, John H.. *Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001)

All of these textbooks may be purchased at the Cokesbury bookstore at Asbury Theological Seminary. The internet link is as follows:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/bookstore.html>

VII. Outline of Wesley's Life:

6/17/03	Born at Epworth
2/09/09	Saved from Fire
5/12/11	Nominated for Charterhouse
1/28/14	Gown-boy at Charterhouse
6/24/20	Enters Christ Church
9/19/25	Ordained Deacon
3/17/26	Fellow of Lincoln College

1729	Name Methodist given
1735	Whitefield joins Holy Club
4/25/35	Samuel Sr.'s Death
10/21/35	Sails for Georgia
02/05/36	Reaches America
08/11/36	Charles leaves Georgia
12/02/37	John leaves Savannah
02/01/38	John lands at Deal
05/21/38	Charles' Evangelical Conversion
05/24/38	John's Evangelical Conversion
06/13/38	Visits the Moravian Church
05/02/39	Field-Preaching in Bristol
11/11/39	Preaches in the Foundery
07/20/40	Withdraws from Fetter Lane
05/28/42	First visit to Newcastle
06/06/42	Preaches on his father's tomb
07/30/42	Death of Susanna Wesley
05/29/43	Opens West Street Chapel, London
08/26/42	Sets out for Cornwall
10/20/42	Riot at Wednesbury
06/25/44	First Conference
08/24/44	Last University sermon
08/09/47	First visit to Ireland
04/08/49	Marriage of Charles
10/03/49	Grace Murray marries John Bennet
02/18/51	Wesley marries Mrs. Vazeille
April/51	First visit to Scotland
06/01/51	Resigns Fellowship
11/26/53	Writes his Epitaph at Lewisham
Jan/55	Notes Upon the NT published
05/06/55	Issue of Separation Discussed
1757	Charles' itinerancy limited
03/13/57	Ordination of John Fletcher
02/16/59	Public Fast; fear of French invasion
02/21/60	French Landing at Carrickfergus
10/25/60	Death of George II
11/26/62	Answer to Bishop Warburton
01/07/63	Wesley meets George Bell
Mar/ 63	Earthquake panic in London

04/28/63	Thomas Maxfield leaves Wesley
04/18/64	Letter to Evangelical Clergy
May/ 64	Hervey Letters published
Jan/ 65	Conference on Ordinations
01/31/66	Closer union with Whitefield
1766	<i>Plain Account</i> Published
03/30/67	Wesley visits Ireland
08/18/67	Francis Asbury received on trial
Jan/ 68	Appointed chaplain to the Countess Dowager
08/24/68	Trevecca College opened
Aug/1770	Doctrinal Minutes of the Bristol Conference
09/30/70	Death of George Whitefield
11/18/70	Wesley preaches at Whitefield's funeral
01/17/71	Benson dismissed from Trevecca
01/23/71	Mrs. Wesley leaves him
09/04/71	Francis Asbury sails for America
09/04/71	Fletcher's 1 and 2 Checks published
08/14/72	Meets Howell Harris at Trevecca
08/14/72	Fletcher's 3 and 4 Checks published
08/14/72	Wesley issues Vols. 11-16 of his Works
03/14/73	Replies to Richard Hill's <i>Farrago Double-Distilled</i>
Dec/73	Vols. 17-25 of Wesley's Works published
06/04/74	Arrest in Edinburgh
1775	<i>Calm Address</i> published
04/27/75	Death of Peter Bohler
Aug/ 75	Asbury decides to stay in America
01/03/76	Death of Westley Hall
08/18/76	Wesley first meets Dr. Coke
04/21/77	Foundation-stone of City Road Chapel laid
01/01/78	First number of Arminian Magazine
05/30/78	Death of Voltaire
11/01/78	Opening of City Road Chapel
1779	Publishes <i>Popery Calmly Considered</i>
08/10/80	Letter to Bishop Lowth on ordination for America
01/25/81	At his Nephew's concert
10/08/81	Death of Mrs. Wesley
Aug/ 82	Adam Clarke at Kingswood School
June/83	Visit to Holland
02/28/84	Deed of Declaration

Sep/ 84	Ordinations for America
Dec/ 84	Francis Asbury Ordained
08/14/85	Death of John Fletcher
01/24/86	Hears George III in House of Lords
07/25/86	Conference begins at Bristol
08/08/86	Visits Holland
09/24/86	Dr. Coke sails with three missionaries
Jan/ 87	Begs £ 200 for London poor
08/04/87	Conference in Manchester
1788	Second Series of Sermons Published
03/29/88	Death of Charles Wesley
04/05/88	Burial of Charles Wesley in Marylebone
08/06/88	Conference at Bristol
07/28/89	Conference at Leeds
1790	Revised Translation of the NT published
07/27/90	Wesley's last Conference in Bristol
07/30/90	Letter to Wilberforce
10/06/90	Last open-air sermon at Winchelsea
10/24/90	Last entry in Wesley's Journal
02/22/91	Last sermon, at Leatherhead
02/24/91	Last letter, to Wilberforce
03/02/91	Dies at City Road at 10:00 a.m.
03/09/91	Buried at City Road

VIII The Modules

Though you should keep up with the flow of the course as presented in the following modules, if you do fall behind, just make sure that you complete the appropriate tasks (with the proper page breaks) before you take each exam.

Module One (First Module to be Completed by February 17, 2003)

Topic: Salvation by Faith

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: I-V

A Real Christian: Chapters 1-3

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Introduction

Module Two (Second Module to be Completed by February 24, 2003)

Topic: Justification by Faith

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: VI-X

A Real Christian: Chapters 4 and 5

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 1

Module Three (Third Module to be Completed by March 3, 2003)

Topic: The Importance of Humility

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XI-XV

A Real Christian: Chapters 6 and 7

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 2

Module Four (Fourth Module to be Completed by March 10, 2003)

Topic: The Witness of the Spirit

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XVI-XX

A Real Christian: Chapters 8, 9, 10

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 3

Module Five (Fifth Module to be Completed by March 17, 2003)

Topic: Wesley's Doctrine of Sin

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XXI-XXV

A Plain Account: The first half

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 4

Module Six (Sixth Module to be Completed by March 24, 2003)

Topic: The Way to Perfect Love

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XXVI-XXX

A Plain Account: The second half

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 5

First Exam: March 24, 2003

Module Seven (Seventh Module to be Completed by March 31, 2003)

Topic: The Standards of Redemption

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XXXI-XXXV

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapters 1 and 2

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 6

Module Eight (Eighth Module to be Completed by April 7, 2003)

Topic: The Importance of the Moral Law

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XXXVI-XL

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 3

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 7

READING WEEK April 7-11, 2003

Module Nine (Ninth Module to be Completed by April 14, 2003)

Topic: The Catholic Spirit

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XLI-XLV

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 4

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 8

Module Ten (Tenth Module to be Completed by April 21, 2003)

Topic: The Flow of Redemption

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XLVI-XLVIII

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 5
Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 9

Module Eleven (Eleventh Module to be Completed by April 28, 2003)

Topic: Challenges on the Way to Perfection

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XLIX-L

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 6

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 10

Module Twelve (Twelfth Module to be Completed by May 5, 2003)

Topic: Personal and Social Ethics

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: LI-LII

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 7 and the Conclusion

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Remaining Chapters

Wrap Up Week May 12, 2003 (No assignment due)

Second Exam: Exam Week (May 19, 2003)

Please observe that the exams are *not* cumulative. After we finish a section and test it, we move on to another. The “final exam,” then, is simply the second exam and it only covers half the course.

IX. Course Procedures:

A. Online Guidelines

Please be sure to share a brief profile (maybe even a picture) of yourself in the *Discussion Center*. My profile is listed under ExL faculty on Asbury’s homepage (Look under Extended Learning, then ExL People Links or just click on the following:)

<http://www.ats.wilmore.ky.us/exl/people/ppllinks.htm>

While I am sure that each of you are aware of the intended use of each of the items which appear in the DO690X folder, let me summarize the manner in which I intend to use them this semester:

The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules.

The Discussion Center will be used for all public communications. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else which would be of interest to your classmates and me you should post to the Discussion Center.

The DO690 Office is for *private* correspondence between you and me. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly before all of your classmates or items that you think may embarrass me if they were to appear publicly.

The Archives Center will be used for storing correspondence which has already been explored during the course of the semester. This keeps the *Discussion Center* from becoming too unmanageable.

The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics.

The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, the Services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a Powerpoint Viewer (which you can use to view my overheads) as well as a Real Audio player. I encourage you to take advantage of all these resources, and particularly to utilize the chapel access in order to connect with the seminary's on-campus opportunities for spiritual growth.

B. Testing

Two examinations will be given during the semester: a mid-term and a final. This component will constitute 75% of the grade.

C. Reading Report

An email reading report which indicates that you have completed all of the required reading is due on the date of the final exam, in the *DO690 Office*. Failure to read all of the assignments will result in grade reduction. For example, if you leave out one

hundred pages from the Burwash text, then instead of receiving an “A-“ you will receive a “B+.” If you leave out more material, then the grade will fall even lower.

D. Class participation

Class participation and completion of the assigned tasks (tapes and readings) will count as 25% of your grade. I am looking for theological reflection, the ability to think globally, the capacity both to see the larger picture of Wesley’s theology and to make appropriate connections. Be creative, feel free in your thinking, and do have fun. A suitable response might be composed of a paragraph or two of about 50 to 75 words. Try not to be too wordy. I look for quality of thought and reflection not quantity of words.

XI. Bibliography

Primary Sources: Books

Unpublished at This Point

- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 5-6: Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 8: Worship and Prayer. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 10: The Methodist Societies II: The Conference. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 12: Theological Treatises. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 13: The Defense of Christianity. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 14-15: Pastoral, Ethical, and Instructional Writings. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 16: Natural Philosophy and Medicine. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 17: Editorial Works. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 33-34: A Description and Analytical Bibliography of the Publications of John and Charles Wesley. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.

---. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 35: General Index and Miscellanea. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.

Published

Curnock, Nehemiah, ed. *The Journal of Rev. John Wesley*. 8 vols. London: Epworth Press, 1909-1916.

Jackson, Thomas, ed. *The Works of Rev. John Wesley*. 14 vols. London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1829-1831. Reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978.

---, ed. *The Journals of Rev. Charles Wesley*. 2 vols. London: John Mason, 1949. Reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House 1980.

Outler, Albert C. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vols. 1-4: Sermons. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-1987.

Telford, John, ed. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*. 8 vols. London: Epworth Press, 1931.

Ward, W. Reginald, and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 18: Journals and Diaries I. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988.

---. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 19: Journals and Diaries II. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.

---. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 20: Journals and Diaries III. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

---. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 21: Journals and Diaries IV. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.

---. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 22: Journals and Diaries V. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.

Wesley, John. *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*. London: William Bowyer, 1755. Most recent reprint, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987.

---. *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*. 3 vols. Bristol: William Pine, 1765. Facsimile reprint, Salem, OH: Schmul Publishers, 1975.

---. *A Christian Library, Consisting of Extracts from and Abridgements of the Choicest Pieces of Practical Divinty which have been published in the English Tongue*. 30 vols. London: T. Blanshard, 1819-1827.

---. *Devotions and Prayers of John Wesley*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977.

---. *The Journal of John Wesley: A Selection*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

- . *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. London: Epworth Press. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990.
- . *Wesley's Forms of Prayers*. Library of Methodist Classics. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992.

Students may also access the far more extensive Wesley bibliography on Asbury's homepage (look under "Resources") or download it from <http://wesley.nnc.edu/>